

D-349
Masonic Lodge
c. 1875
Cambridge

Built around 1875 as a headquarters for the Cambridge Lodge No. 66 of the Ancient Free Accepted Masons, this three-story commercial block stands at the intersection of High and Poplar streets in the center of the county seat. The three-story pressed brick structure was designed to fit the corner lot with a commercial entrance situated at the intersection of the two streets. The first story storefront elevation retains its third quarter of the nineteenth century cornice with widely spaced paired brackets. The upper stories of brickwork above the storefront cornice are defined by horizontal beltcourses that mark the floor levels and divide rows of large sized two-over-two sash windows that retain bracketed cornices. Finishing the top of the street elevations is a wood cornice executed with boldly carved brackets and a row of modillion blocks under the soffit.

Between 1873 and 1921, this prominent corner property was owned by the Cambridge Lodge No. 66 of the Ancient Free and Accepted Masons, a chapter of one of the most prominent fraternal organizations in America during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The three-story pressed brick facades present a distinctive front to both High and Poplar streets with original bracketed cornices above the two-over-two sash windows. The top of the street elevations is distinguished by a boldly bracketed cornice that disguises the shape of the low hip roof.

Following its use as a Masonic Lodge, the building was the site of a store owned by George W. Meekins, who held title to the property between 1921 and 1957.

Inventory No. D-349

| | |
|----------|---|
| historic | Masonic Lodge No. 66 |
| other | Farmers and Merchants National Bank, George W. Meekins Store Property |

| | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|---|---------------------|
| street and number | 543 Poplar Street | — | not for publication |
| city, town | Cambridge | . | vicinity |
| county | Dorchester | | |

| | | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|-----------|----------|
| name | Howard Gage Thomas | | |
| street and number | P.O. Box 404 | telephone | |
| city, town | Cambridge | state | Maryland |
| | | zip code | 21613 |

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Dorchester County Clerk of Court liber MLB 453 folio 545
city, town Cambridge tax map 301 tax parcel 4432 tax ID number 112114

☐ Contributing Resource in National Register District
☐ Contributing Resource in Local Historic District
☐ Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
☐ Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
☐ Recorded by HABS/HAER
☐ Historic Structure Report or Research Report at MHT
☐ Other:

| Category | Ownership | Current Function | Resource Count |
|--------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|--|
| _____ district | _____ public | _____ agriculture | Contributing |
| <u> x </u> building(s) | _____ private | _____ landscape | Noncontributing |
| _____ structure | _____ both | _____ commerce/trade | <u> 1 </u> |
| _____ site | | _____ recreation/culture | _____ buildings |
| _____ object | | _____ religion | _____ sites |
| | | _____ social | _____ structures |
| | | <u> x </u> domestic | _____ objects |
| | | _____ education | <u> 1 </u> Total |
| | | _____ funerary | |
| | | _____ government | |
| | | _____ health care | |
| | | _____ industry | |
| | | _____ work in progress | |
| | | _____ unknown | |
| | | _____ vacant/not in use | |
| | | _____ other: | |
| | | | Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory |

7. Description

Inventory No. D-349

Condition

| | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good | <input type="checkbox"/> ruins |
| <input type="checkbox"/> fair | <input type="checkbox"/> altered |

Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The Masonic Lodge No. 66, located at 543 Poplar Street, is a three-story corner structure that stands at the intersection of High and Poplar streets in the center of Cambridge, Dorchester County, Maryland. The three-story pressed brick structure faces west. Built of stretcher bond brick laid in narrow butter joints, the street elevations differ from the sides and back which are laid in more typical common bond. The corner commercial block has a four-bay exposure on Poplar Street and a three-bay exposure on High Street. Built around 1875, the six-sided structure is covered by a modified hip roof of asphalt shingles.

The first floor street elevation of the three-story structure has been partly altered but retains a corner double door entrance facing the intersection of High and Poplar. The doorway has been altered and is flanked by large display windows of later date. The High Street elevation retains an original double door entrance in the northern bay, and heavy molded doors are topped by a three-light transom. Stretching across the wall surface above the first floor storefront openings is a bracketed wood cornice. The brackets are set in widely spaced pairs. The second and third stories are basically intact. Pressed brick laid with a narrow butter joint is joined with four-course common bond brick beltcourses that stretch across the front below the window sill heights. Two-over-two sash windows are framed by heavy half round window trim, and bold window cornices are supported by small carved brackets. The third story windows are slightly taller than the second story openings. Stretching across the top of the wall surface is a large wood cornice executed with evenly spaced carved brackets between bays, and a row of modillion blocks line the underside of the soffit;

The side walls are laid in common bond with regular wall brick, and much of the wall surfaces are covered by adjacent commercial blocks. The top of wall is finished with a corbelled brick cornice. Attached to the rear elevation is a modern two-story frame infill that rises three stories. The building is in the process of renovation. The interiors of the structure have been gutted.

8. Significance

Inventory No. D-349

| Period | Areas of Significance | Check and justify below | | | |
|---|--|---|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699 | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> economics | <input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine | <input type="checkbox"/> performing arts | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799 | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology | <input type="checkbox"/> education | <input type="checkbox"/> industry | <input type="checkbox"/> philosophy | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> invention | <input type="checkbox"/> politics/government | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999 | <input type="checkbox"/> art | <input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/ recreation | <input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> religion | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2000- | <input type="checkbox"/> commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage | <input type="checkbox"/> law | <input type="checkbox"/> science | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> communications | <input type="checkbox"/> exploration/ settlement | <input type="checkbox"/> literature | <input type="checkbox"/> social history | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> community planning | | <input type="checkbox"/> maritime history | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> conservation | | <input type="checkbox"/> military | <input type="checkbox"/> other: _____ | |

Specific dates

Architect/Builder

Construction dates

Evaluation for:

☐ National Register☐ Maryland Register☒ not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

Built around 1875 as a headquarters for the Cambridge Lodge No. 66 of the Ancient Free and Accepted Masons, this three-story commercial block stands at the intersection of High and Poplar streets in the center of the county seat. The three-story pressed brick structure was designed to fit the corner lot with a commercial entrance situated at the intersection of the two streets. The first story commercial elevation retains its third quarter of the nineteenth-century cornice with paired brackets. The upper stories of brickwork above the storefront cornice are defined by horizontal beltcourses that mark the floor levels and divide rows of large sized two-over-two sash windows which retain bracketed cornices. Finishing the top of the street elevations is a wood cornice executed with boldly carved brackets and a row of modillion blocks under the cornice soffit.

Between 1873 and 1921,¹ this prominent corner property was owned by the Cambridge Lodge No. 66 of the Ancient Free & Accepted Masons, a chapter of one of the most prominent fraternal organizations in America during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The three story pressed brick façade presents a distinctive front to High and Poplar streets with original bracketed cornices above the two-over-two window sash. The top of the front wall surfaces is distinguished by a boldly bracketed cornice that disguises the shape of the low hip roof.

Following its use as a Masonic Lodge, the building was the site of a store owned by George W. Meekins, who held title to the property between 1921 and 1957.

¹ Dorchester County Land Record, FJH 9/366, 23 April 1874; Dorchester County Land Record, JFD 11/147, 27 December 1921.

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. D-349

Name Masonic Lodge No. 66
Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 1

CHAIN- OF-TITLE
543 Poplar Street

MLB 453/545

John M. Redmon

to

6.29.2001

Howard Gage Thomas

PLC 247/140

Howard Gage Thomas

to

10.28.1987

John M. Redmon

PLC 216/111

Farmers & Merchants National Bank of Cambridge

to

9.23.1980

Howard Gage Thomas
Clark Henry Thomas
Diana Carol Hastings
Kent Mace Thomas

543 Poplar Street

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. D-349

Name Masonic Lodge No. 66
Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 2

RSM 104/110

George N. Meekins et al. (Granville S. LeCompte,
and Lee S. LeCompte)

to

5.6.1957

Farmers and Merchants Bank of Cambridge

"George W. Meekins Store Property"

JFD 11/147

The Cambridge Lodge No. 66 of Ancient Free &
Accepted Masons of Maryland

to

12.27.1921

George W. Meekins

FJH 9/366

Charles E. Hayward, Trustee

to

4.23.1874

The Cambridge Lodge No. 66 of Ancient and Free
Accepted Masons

FJH 9/78

William H. Jordan
Sarah Jordan

to

7.1.1873

Charles E. Hayward

\$400 on the eastward corner of High and Poplar streets

9. Major Bibliographical References

Inventory No. D-349

Dorchester County Land Records, various volumes, Dorchester County Courthouse

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property 2,140 square feet
Acreage of historical setting 2,140 square feet
Quadrangle name Cambridge, 1988

Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

Verbal boundary description and justification

The metes and bounds of this property are coincidental with the current boundary of the lot.

11. Form Prepared by

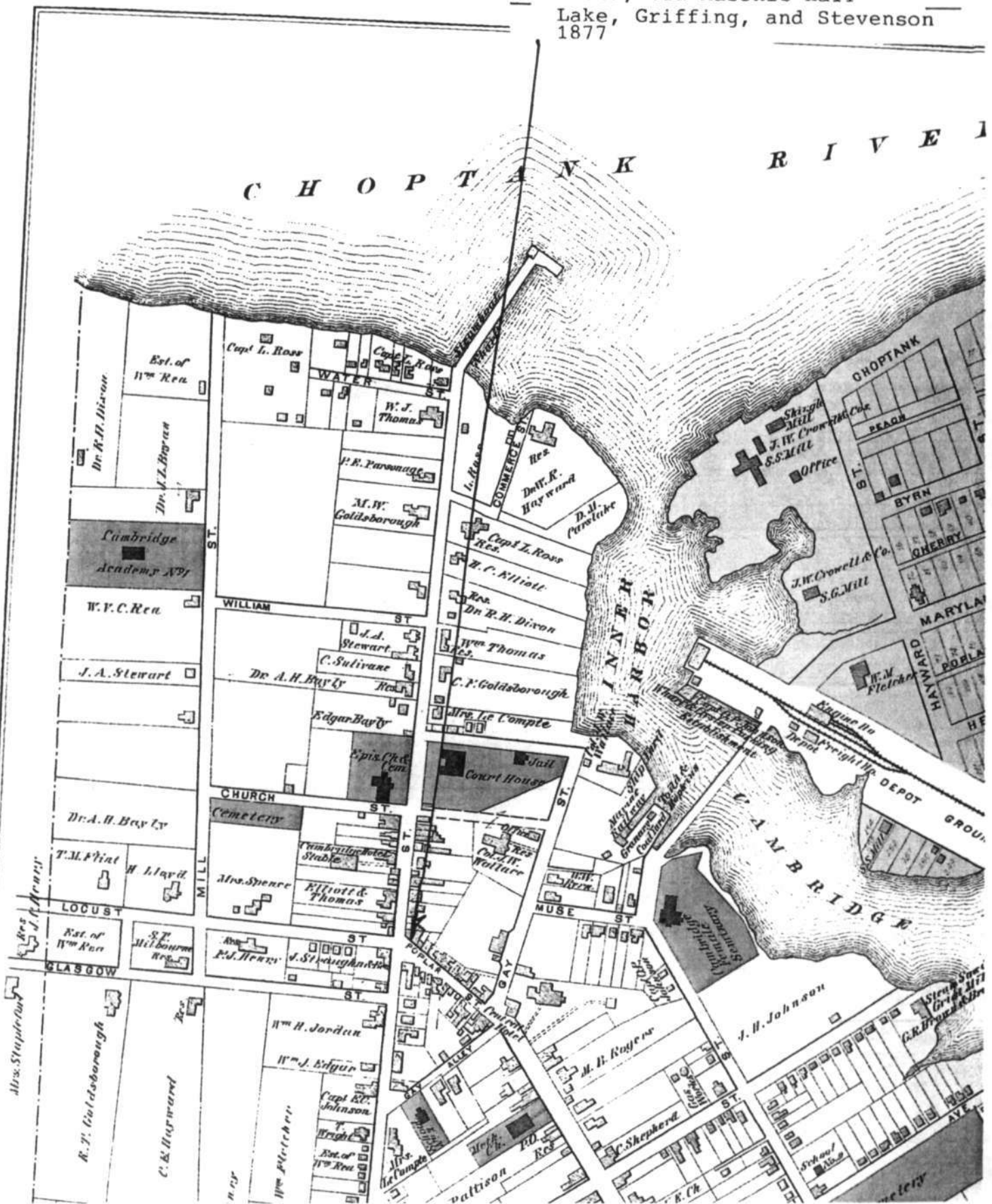
| | | | |
|-----------------|--|-----------|----------------|
| name/title | Paul B. Touart, Architectural Historian | | |
| organization | Chesapeake Country Heritage & Preservation | date | 9/17/2007 |
| street & number | P. O. Box 5 | telephone | 410-651-1094 |
| city or town | Westover | state | Maryland 21871 |

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
DHCD/DHCP
100 Community Place
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023
410-514-7600

D-349, Old Masonic Hall
Lake, Griffing, and Stevenson
1877



D-349, Old Masonic Lodge
Cambridge, MD Quadrangle 1988



D-349

Old Masonic Hall

CAMBRIDGE, DORCHESTER Co., MD.

NORTHWEST ELEVATION

9/07, PAUL TOWART, PITOTOKAPITUM

NEG. / M.D. HISTORICAL TRUST



D-349

Old Masonic Hall
CAMBRIDGE, DORCHESTER Co., MA.
SOUTHEAST ELEVATION

9/07, PAUL TONART, PHOTOGRAPHER
WETA / MA. HISTORICAL TRUST

2/2

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

D-349

1603494711

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC

AND/OR COMMON

Choptank Real Estate

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

543 Poplar Street

CITY, TOWN

Cambridge

— VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

1

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Dorchester

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- ☐ DISTRICT
☒ BUILDING(S)
☐ STRUCTURE
☐ SITE
☐ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- ☐ PUBLIC
☒ PRIVATE

☐ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

- ☐ IN PROCESS
☐ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- ☒ OCCUPIED
☐ UNOCCUPIED
☐ WORK IN PROGRESS
ACCESSIBLE
☒ YES: RESTRICTED
☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED
☐ NO

PRESENT USE

- ☐ AGRICULTURE ☐ MUSEUM
☒ COMMERCIAL ☐ PARK
☐ EDUCATIONAL ☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE
☐ ENTERTAINMENT ☐ RELIGIOUS
☐ GOVERNMENT ☐ SCIENTIFIC
☐ INDUSTRIAL ☐ TRANSPORTATION
☐ MILITARY ☐ OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Farmers and Merchants Bank

Telephone #:

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

— VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
 REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Dorchester County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

206 High Street

CITY, TOWN

Cambridge

STATE

Maryland

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

— FEDERAL — STATE — COUNTY — LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
 SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

D-349

CONDITION

☐ EXCELLENT
☐ GOOD
☐ FAIR

☒ DETERIORATED
☐ RUINS
☐ UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

☐ UNALTERED
☒ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE
☐ MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

This three story brick office building, on the corner of Poplar and High Streets, dates to some time around the turn of the 20th century and has changed little except on the first story where larger windows have been added, replacing the original openings. The upper two stories remain basically unchanged but are badly in need of paint, and have not been in use for several years. The cornice is supported by carved brackets and is ornamented by modillions. There are four bays on the south facade which faces Poplar Street, and three bays on the west facade facing High Street. Above the window on the upper stories are projecting flat arches supported by carved brackets. A raised beltcourse of brick marks the second and third story divisions. Between the first and second stories is a cornice supported by carved brackets.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

PERIOD

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

| | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING | <input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499 | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC | <input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION | <input type="checkbox"/> LAW | <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599 | <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS | <input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE | <input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY | <input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799 | <input type="checkbox"/> ART | <input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING | <input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC | <input type="checkbox"/> THEATER |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE | <input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY | <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1900- | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY | <input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION | | |

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This building was originally used as a Masonic Hall and was built by J. Benjamin Brown, a local architect. It is significant as an example of turn of the century architecture and is a visual link between the late 19th century buildings on High Street and those on this corner of Poplar Street, which are some of the most architecturally distinctive commercial buildings in Cambridge. Although this building has been altered little, the maintenance of the upper stories has been badly neglected. With paint and removal of deteriorated window shades in the unused upper stories, this could be a handsome building.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Catherine L. Moore

ORGANIZATION

DATE

11/30/75

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

Route 3, Box 32

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

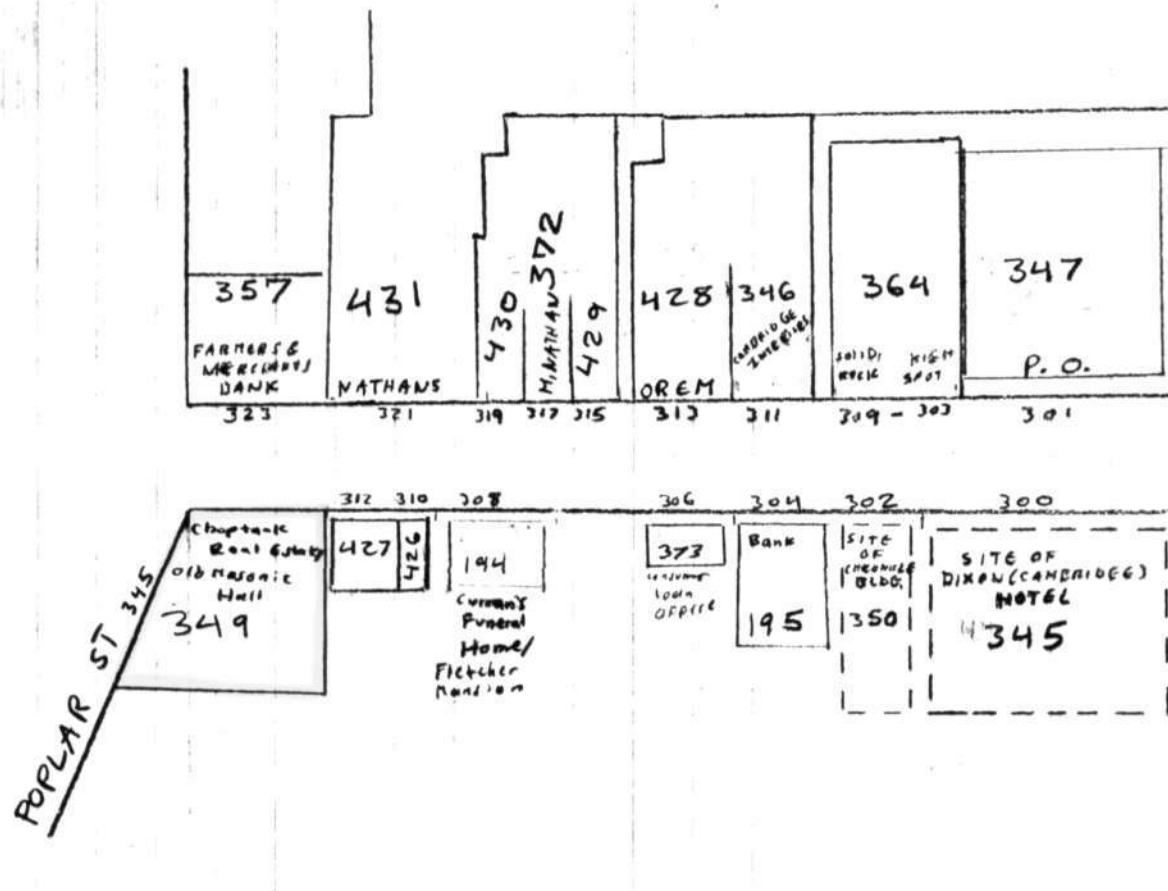
Cambridge

Maryland

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

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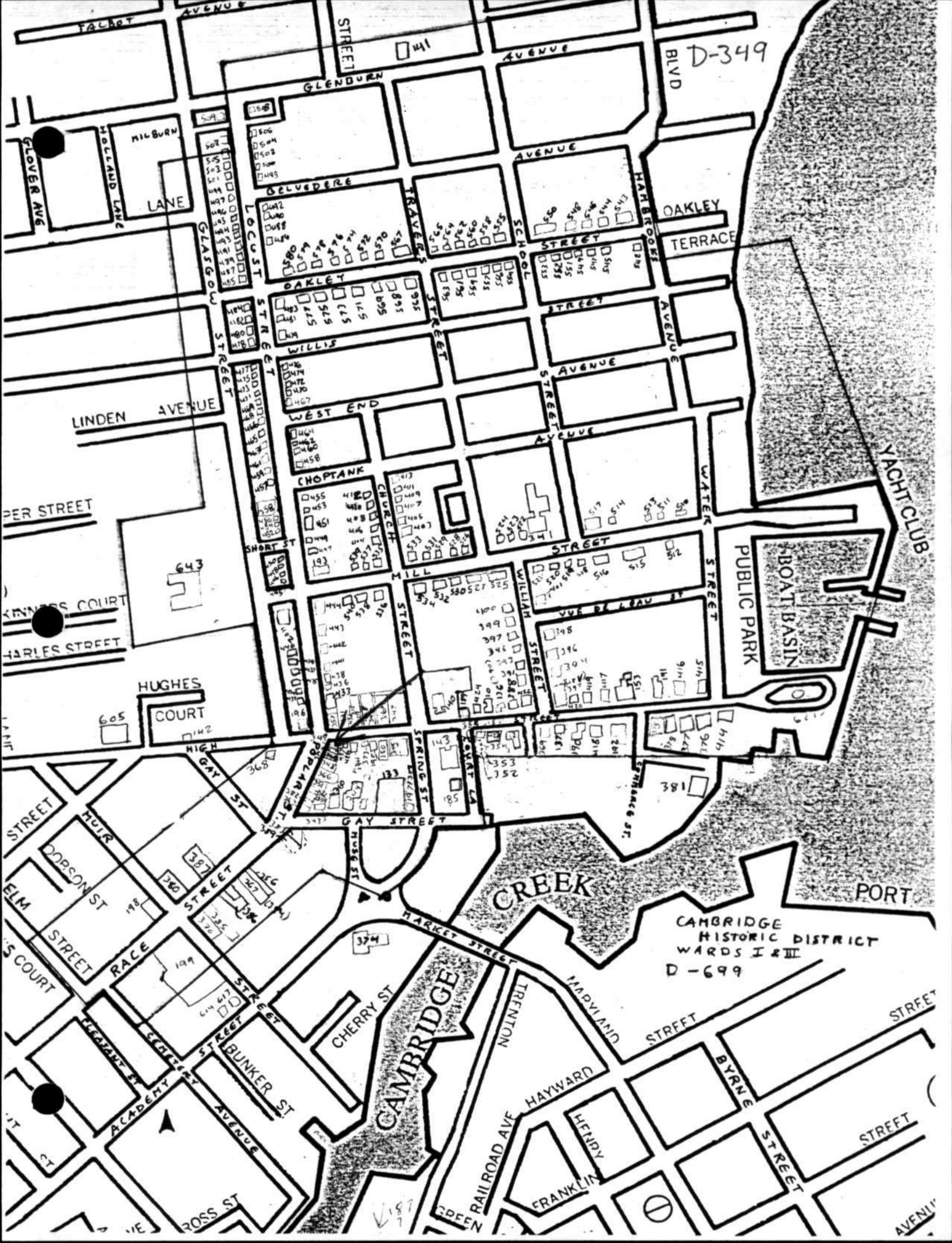
RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 267-1438



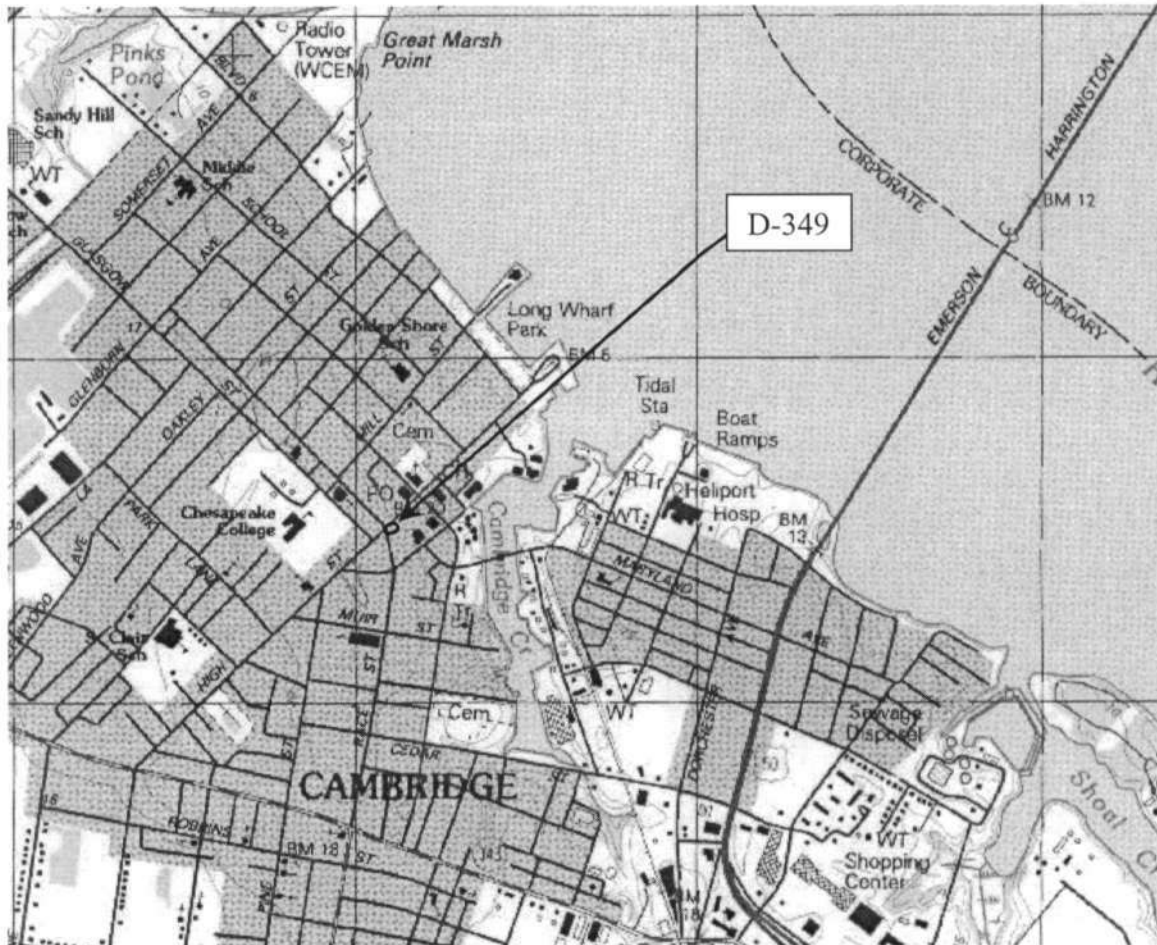
HIGH STREET
← (300 BLOCK)

J. KOZLAY
12/21/93

D-349



D-349
Choptank Real Estate
543 Poplar St.
Cambridge
Cambridge Quad.
Dorchester Co.





543 Poplar St, Cambridge, Md. - South Facade - C.L. Moore, 1976

(D-349)

45%